

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Shizue Murakami Johnson

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Shizue Murakami Johnson was born October 2, 1921 in Lahaina, Maui. She is the oldest of four daughters of Kajiro and Kiju Murakami, who were immigrants from Japan. When Shizue was three years old, the family moved to Moloka'i.

After briefly living in Kaunakakai and Kala'e, they moved on to the Pu'uoHoku Ranch, where Kajiro cultivated pineapple. They later farmed in Moanui. The family then leased land in Mapulehu Valley, which Kiju continued to farm even after Kajiro's death in 1937. She shipped tomatoes to Honolulu, and peddled other vegetables in different areas of the island.

Shizue attended Hālawa School while they lived at Pu'uoHoku Ranch. When they moved to Mapulehu, she attended Kalua'aha School. When Kalua'aha School closed, she went to Kilohana School in 'Ualapu'e. Shizue also attended Pūko'o Japanese-language School.

In 1938, Shizue moved to Honolulu and worked as a maid and as a waitress. She married Carl Johnson in 1942 and raised two children. They live in Kāne'ohe.

Tape No. 19-21-1-90

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Shizue Murakami Johnson (SJ)

July 20, 1990

Kāne'ohe, O'ahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Shizue Johnson on July 20, 1990, in Kāne'ohe, O'ahu. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay. Why don't we start by, first, tell me when you were born and where you were born.

SJ: I was born in Lahaina, Maui, October 2, 1921.

WN: What was your father [Kajiro Murakami] doing in Lahaina?

SJ: He was doing the same kind of job, tunnel work, they dig the tunnel.

WN: Employed by who?

SJ: That, I don't know. I don't know who he was employed. I was too young to remember.

WN: And then, how old were you when you moved to Moloka'i?

SJ: I'm not sure. I think I must have been about three, I think.

WN: And where did you live first?

SJ: When I came to Moloka'i?

WN: Yeah.

SJ: I think we lived in Kaunakakai and then we went up to Kala'e. And then from Kala'e, we moved back to Kaunakakai. And then, we went up to Pu'uoHoku [Ranch]. My father had a farm up Pu'uoHoku, you know, pineapple farming. And then later on, he worked for the Browns. And then he did regular vegetable farming. From there, we moved to Moanui. That was part of Brown's estate, I guess, and they had alfalfa fields. So my father used to work in the alfalfa fields, and then we had a little farm, too, in Moanui. And then from there, we moved to Pūko'o. Then we had a farm up in Mapulehu Valley. Then we moved up to Mapulehu Valley. We built our house and was renting it from the HSPA [Hawaiian Sugar

Planters' Association]. Then when the war [World War II] broke out, my mother them had to get out because the service people were going to be up there. There were going to have soldiers up there. So then they moved down to 'Ualapu'e side. But before that, they moved down to Kalua'aha because, you know, right after the war, they had no houses, so they moved up to Kalua'aha. It belonged to the Hustace [family]. And my mother [Kiju Murakami] was working in the pineapple field. The trucks came to pick them up. And then she moved to 'Ualapu'e.

WN: 'Ualapu'e.

SJ: Yeah. And then she came to Honolulu.

WN: So what is your first recollection of Moloka'i? I mean, what house? Kaunakakai or . . .

SJ: No. I don't remember the one at Kaunakakai, but I remember the one up Pu'uoHoku because we used to have a lot of wildlife. The deer used to come right in the backyard, and we'd have lots of fresh, wild fruits and stuff that we didn't have to buy or anything like that. We went to Hālawa School. We walked to Hālawa School from Pu'uoHoku because there were no buses those days. And my mother learned to drive up there, up Pu'uoHoku. That was in 1929. I remember because she got her license in 1929. Then she drove us around all the time. That time, cars were not very many. Very few.

WN: So when you were in Pu'uoHoku, that's when you folks had started a farm or . . .

SJ: Yeah, we started a farm.

WN: Was he [father] employed at all by the ranch?

SJ: Yeah, he was employed part-time by Brown. Then he moved to Moanui where he worked kind of part-time for the Browns, too. They had a alfalfa field there, and then we had a farm.

WN: I see.

SJ: Then, we moved to Pūko'o, [because] the Browns had sold out already. They had sold out [i.e., Pu'uoHoku Ranch] to the Fagans.

WN: Fagans?

SJ: Yeah, Paul Fagan. So we moved to Pūko'o side.

WN: I see. And what did you folks do in Pūko'o?

SJ: We had a farm up Mapulehu Valley.

WN: Oh, so the farm that you folks did in Moanui was . . .

SJ: No, that was . . .

WN: You folks didn't do anything.

SJ: No. Not much. The main [farm] was at Mapulehu Valley. And then we built a house there. We could build a house, you know. And then whenever you built a house there, when you move out, you can tear the house down and take your lumber, you know, whatever you did.

WN: Oh, is that what you folks did?

SJ: Yeah.

WN: (Chuckles) Oh, interesting.

SJ: That's what they did. And then they moved to Kalua'aha side, where the Hitchcocks had a place right on the beach. Actually, Hustace had bought it out from the Hitchcocks, I think. And then from there, [we] moved to 'Ualapu'e.

WN: Okay. So as you were a little girl growing up in—well, let's start with Pūko'o. What was it like? What kind of things did you folks do?

SJ: Well, it was real country life, you know. We went to the ocean and we dug clams and stuff like that. We caught shrimp. All those things. Not too much activities because it was real country. Either that or you worked in the farm, had to help the parents.

WN: What did you do on the farm?

SJ: Well, we had to weed, you know, we had to hoe. (Chuckles)

WN: *Hō hana?*

SJ: Yeah, *hō hana* (chuckles). *Hō hana*, and then sometimes we had to go and pick the tomatoes. But we have to know what kind to pick. Then pack it in the box and then we used to ship it.

WN: So, besides tomatoes, what did you folks grow?

SJ: We had lima beans. And then we had sweet potatoes. Of course, peanuts was for us to eat. We had peanuts, and then we had cucumbers, which my mother sold. You know, when she was peddling, she sold cucumbers and lima beans, and some tomatoes that were ripe. She was peddling because she couldn't ship it to Honolulu because when they're ripe, you can't ship because it gets all smashed by the time it gets to Honolulu, you know, the way they handle.

WN: Has to be kind of green.

SJ: Yeah, it's kind of half ripe, you know, sort of green. So she used to take it down to Kamalō Wharf and then ship it on the *Moi* to Honolulu.

WN: She did it herself?

SJ: Yeah. 'Cause my father died in 1937 while we were in Mapulehu.

WN: I see.

SJ: My father died in 1937.

WN: So how did farming, when you compare farming in Moanui, Pūko'o, and Mapulehu, what were the differences?

SJ: Well, Mapulehu was better because we lived in Pūko'o only, but the farming was done in Mapulehu Valley.

WN: Oh, I see.

SJ: See, we have to come up to Mapulehu Valley, farming, because Pūko'o, there was no land for farming. So we had it up at Mapulehu Valley. It belonged to HSPA and we used to lease the land from them.

WN: How far away was your house in Pūko'o to the lands in Mapulehu?

SJ: Well, I don't know. Quite a distance, you have to walk. But those days, walking meant nothing, not like now. Now, they say, "Oh, it's so far." But those days, three miles, we didn't think anything because to catch the bus [to school], you know, if we had bus service, if we were [within] the three-mile limit, then we can have free bus service. But otherwise we have to walk. So I guess we weren't on the three-mile limit because we had to walk to school.

(Laughter)

WN: Three miles is the limit?

SJ: Yeah. If it's [less than] three miles, you have to walk to school. So rain or shine, we had to walk to school, barefooted, all that.

WN: And this is Kalua'aha School?

SJ: Yeah. And then [when] they closed down Kalua'aha [School], then we went to Kilohana [School].

WN: And then you could ride?

SJ: No, we still didn't ride. (WN laughs.) We still walked.

WN: Still walked.

SJ: But it was fun because, you know, you see all these things, and then you pick wild fruits on the way.

WN: Tell me something about Kalua'aha School.

SJ: Well, I don't remember too much, but it was a real country school and, well, we had a big

yard. We used to play jump rope and all that stuff. We used to have a little vegetable garden for the kids to plant. And we had a cafeteria there where they served food. I think it was a nickel for lunch.

WN: Who was your teacher?

SJ: First I had Mrs. Duvauchelle. That was Becky's mother. We had Mrs. Inaba, too, but I don't remember what grade that was, Mrs. Inaba. And then we had Mr. Kaupu. And then . . .

WN: Is that the reverend?

SJ: Father, the reverend's father.

WN: Oh, the reverend's father.

SJ: Edward Kaupu.

WN: Oh, [Rev.] David Kaupu's father?

SJ: Yeah. David Kaupu's father. I think he's probably passed away by now. And then Mr. Kaupu went to Hālawā School because Mr. Kalaau passed away. So he took over that position. And then we had Miss Yoshida. I think she's Mrs. Kawano now, and she lives in Kaunakakai, I think. She was our teacher. And then we had Mr. [Albert] Inaba. That was it, you know, up to eighth grade. That was all they had. And then we went to Kilohana School because they closed down Kalua'aha School and they moved to Kilohana School.

WN: What grade were you when they closed down Kalua'aha School? You remember?

SJ: I don't quite remember what grade I was. But I remember going to Kilohana School. Mrs. Ching taught us. And then we had girl scouting. I think Miss Naehu was our scout leader. And then we used to have a dentist, they used to come in and check on our teeth. Dr. Chu.

WN: Uh huh, Arthur Chu?

SJ: Yeah.

WN: Yeah.

SJ: First the dental hygienist came, and she checked our teeth. She marked it all down to see what was wrong, and cleaned our teeth. And then Dr. Chu came and whatever had to be done, he did it for us. But we didn't pay anything at that time. Later on, we had to pay our own. But that time, we didn't pay anything. I think Maui County sort of paid for it.

WN: Did you know that I [met] Dr. Chu?

SJ: Yeah, you told me. You told me you took him to lunch.

WN: Yeah.

(Laughter)

WN: I forgot to ask him if he remembered you, though.

SJ: No, I don't think he remembers me. He probably remembers my mother.

WN: Oh, oh, oh.

SJ: Tell him, the lady that used to drive the truck and used to sell vegetables, then he probably remembers, but otherwise, he won't remember us because we were kids. If you tell him Murakami lady from Pūko'o with the vegetable truck, he'll probably remember my mother. Ask him when you go back next time.

WN: Okay. So how were your teachers? Were they strict or . . .

SJ: Oh, yeah, I remember Mrs. Duvauchelle was really strict. And Mr. Kaupu, too. If you were daydreaming, Mr. Kaupu's eraser came flying down. I still remember that because I remember that boy sitting next to me, the eraser came flying down. He says, "What's the matter? *Ho'onanea?*" Boom, the eraser came flying.

WN: (Chuckles) Interesting.

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

WN: Okay, and then so tell me something about Mapulehu Valley? What was it like, who was living there?

SJ: Mapulehu, we had Muraoka, he was way up in the mountain end. The Halemanus lived there little while. And then we had the Uyeharas and then the Kawatas, and then after that, the Hayashis moved into Kawata's place. And then it was us, and then we had Ikeda, he was a bachelor man. And then we had Honda, and then the Akasakas. That was it from Mapulehu Valley. And then when you came down across this road, was [George] Otsuka and on this side was the [Dibble] Ilae family that's related to the Crane family.

WN: You mean the main road?

SJ: Yeah.

WN: Down by the . . .

SJ: Yeah, the main road like this, and then Otsuka was by the beach.

WN: Oh.

SJ: And the Ilae was right here. And then go through the road over there, and here's Ilae's house. And as you go down, and then there was the Crane family.

WN: And this is considered Mapulehu, too, by the road?

SJ: Yeah. Mapulehu. Because just across the street, you know, main highway, Mapulehu.

WN: And then most of these families, what, they were mostly farming?

SJ: No. The Otsukas worked for the HSPA, you know, he worked for the HSPA. He was sort of like the overseer, you know, kind of checked up on the place.

WN: So HSPA owned the land in Mapulehu?

SJ: That time. I don't know if they owned it or they leased it or what, but it was under HSPA, anyway. And George Otsuka was the one that kind of took care, Ernest's father. And then we had the Ilae family, I think he worked for the county, I think. And then we had the Crane family. And then there was Brito family, B-R-I . . .

WN: Brito?

SJ: Yeah, B-R-I-T-O. And then we had the Bicoy family, and then the [Our Lady of Sorrows] Catholic Church.

WN: This is Kalua'aha already.

SJ: Yeah, going to Kalua'aha. And then on the beach side, there was a Hirata family that lived there. And then we went down, it was all empty. There was that old church, that—Hawaiian church [Kalua'aha Church].

WN: Protestant church?

SJ: Yeah. Was there. Then as you go down, then there was this Ah Tim Store, we used to call it Ah Tim Store, but I think his name was Tom. And later on, they sold it to Fujimoto. And the Fujimotos had it. Then after that, we had another Watanabe down the road.

WN: Now, are we still in Kalua'aha, here?

SJ: Yeah, we're still in Kalua'aha. Watanabe, and then there was that Lima family, I think, and I don't know who else lived in that. It was sort of a little community there. And then we had—I don't know who lived in that house there, but Kealaikis used to live in one of the houses over there. And then the Kaupus.

WN: We're in 'Ualapu'e, now, right?

SJ: Yeah, going to Kilohana [School]. And then across was Kuruzawas, they moved out. And then the Iaeas. And then Ah Ping Store, and then there was a Chinese cemetery. And then I think the Puailihau lived right next door.

WN: Oh, Puailihau, yeah.

SJ: Yeah, Puailihau. And then the Kawaiis lived on the opposite side. And then I think we had the post office, where the Kalois lived.

WN: Oh, yeah.

SJ: And then the Hagemanns, yeah.

WN: They lived on the ocean side?

SJ: Yeah, the Hagemann. That's Kitty's [Akutagawa] family.

WN: All right.

SJ: And then the Watanabes lived there for a little while, you know, Shinichi Watanabe?

WN: I know Shinichi them lived by Wavecrest [condomniums, in Kamalō], too, yeah?

SJ: Yeah, that was later on.

WN: That was—oh, okay.

SJ: And after that, they lived [where] Wavecrest [is today], and then they came to Honolulu, I think.

WN: I see.

SJ: Where Wavecrest is now.

WN: Okay. Wow, we should draw a map, yeah, put everybody's family's name on it, yeah?

SJ: Yeah (chuckles). You folks going to write a little book or something?

WN: Yeah, we hope to put something together.

SJ: Well, I'd like to see a copy of that later on.

WN: Oh, sure. You'll get a copy. Okay, so, I noticed there's mostly Hawaiians and Japanese living in this area.

SJ: They all mixed up, you know. Yeah, they all mixed up.

WN: Did you folks mix a lot with the Hawaiians or were they two separate . . .

SJ: Practically everybody knew each other, you know. They weren't real close-knit, but they all knew each other, who was who. But the Japanese mostly got together. Like the Japanese[-language] school, they had something, they all got together, you know. But we didn't have other nationalities in the group because that was Japanese[-language] school.

WN: Yeah, right. Did you have Hawaiians going to Japanese school at all?

SJ: No, we didn't have anybody.

WN: So, you folks went to the Pūko‘o Japanese School?

SJ: We went to Pūko‘o Japanese School.

WN: And then there was another one in that area, yeah?

SJ: That was Kaunakakai—I mean, Kamalō.

WN: Kamalō.

SJ: They had a Kamalō Japanese School. That, they had only on weekends. Because the minister from Kaunakakai used to come to Kamalō to teach them. We had our own teacher in Pūko‘o.

WN: Oh, what was his name?

SJ: Ours was [Shigeki] Tani, but he passed away already.

WN: So when would you go to Japanese school?

SJ: After school.

WN: After English school?

SJ: After English school, we all went. And an hour, Japanese school. And then . . .

WN: So you walked from Mapulehu Valley to Kalua‘aha School?

SJ: Yeah.

WN: And then you walked to Pūko‘o Japanese School?

SJ: Yeah.

WN: Ho. That’s quite a ways, yeah? (Chuckles)

SJ: Be we were used to it, so you didn’t think anything of it. And Saturday, we had half a day.

WN: Japanese school?

SJ: And Sunday, we didn’t have any school.

WN: I see. So most of the Japanese who lived in Mapulehu Valley went to Pūko‘o Japanese School?

SJ: Yeah, all the Japanese that lived in that area went to Japanese school.

WN: Do you know how the Japanese school was supported?

- SJ: Every parents that had their kids going, had to pay. I don't know how much, but they paid. And that was the teacher's salary. And those days, you know, even a few dollars, even if it was fifty dollars or so, it was big money, you know. Not like now. Now, it's nothing. You can't even live on it.
- WN: (Chuckles) Yeah. So most of the Japanese who lived in the valley were farmers?
- SJ: Yeah, they were all farmers.
- WN: Did they all farm more or less the same thing?
- SJ: No. Akasaka had a little chicken farm.
- WN: And the rest were vegetables?
- SJ: Yeah.
- WN: And you said that your mom peddled?
- SJ: Yeah, after whatever she shipped to Honolulu and then whatever she cannot sell, she used to peddle. She took it up to Kualapu'u, you know, that [pineapple plantation] camp.
- WN: Oh, that's a long ways.
- SJ: Yeah, she drove up there. Early in the morning she got up and she drove up there.
- WN: Every day?
- SJ: No, it was about three times a week, I think.
- WN: Is that right? That's a long way.
- SJ: But those days, she used to drive, you know. And no traffic, so it's not so bad.
- WN: So the camp, you mean, the pineapple field camp?
- SJ: That's right. So she used to . . .
- WN: Did she go to Maunaloa, too?
- SJ: No, she didn't go. I think [Kamado] Shimabukuro did.
- WN: Wow.
- SJ: The one that used to live right next door to the Watanabes, by where Wavecrest is.
- WN: I see.

SJ: Used to be next door to them.

WN: And who was her clientele, mostly?

SJ: My mother's?

WN: Yeah.

SJ: All mixed. All kind, Filipinos and all that. Wherever, you know, she stopped at certain area, and they all came out.

WN: (Chuckles) Was it only vegetables she sold?

SJ: Yeah, vegetables. Once in a while she'd have fish, if the fisherman came and said, "Oh, I caught some fish and can you help me sell it." Then she would do it for them, but outside of that, she didn't.

WN: So prior to your father passing away [in 1937], your father was more or less the farmer?

SJ: Yeah. Because he was sickly, he didn't do too much.

WN: I see.

SJ: So my mother was more like a main breadwinner, you know. But of course, we all had our own chores, because we had chickens, too. We had pigs.

WN: So what were your chores?

SJ: My chore was to cook. That was my job.

WN: You mean, the meals for the family?

SJ: Yeah. And then my sister, the one next to me, she's the one that had to feed the pigs and all that. And then I have another sister in here. Let's see now. (SJ examines photograph.)

WN: You have three sisters?

SJ: With me, makes four. So this is my sister, she lives in Petaluma on the Mainland. That's the one.

WN: Oh, she looks just like you.

SJ: Little bit. (WN chuckles.) And then this is the third one. She was the one that just retired from Kuakini [Medical Center] as chief anesthetist.

WN: Oh, really?

SJ: She retired from there. And then this is the baby sister. She passed away, and this is my

mother.

WN: Oh, okay.

SJ: And this is the Japanese school teacher.

WN: Mr. Tani?

SJ: Mm hmm.

WN: So, what kind of things did you cook at home?

SJ: Well, you know, we didn't have too much meat stuff because, you know, we have to buy. We didn't have any refrigerator. So whatever my mother bought or stuff we had. Cooked vegetables, mostly. And then people brought fish. Even if they bought meat, we never had steaks. (WN chuckles.) You know, it was all cooked with vegetables, because we didn't have refrigerator. The only time we had soda ice cold was when we had something at the Japanese school.

WN: What kind of stove did you have?

SJ: We had wood stove. We had to go pick up wood. And we had to cook rice in this old cast-iron thing with the wooden cover. And we had bathtub with the wooden thing.

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

SJ: But we had *furo* outside. And then we even had to cook the pig slop, too. My mother, when she went to peddle her vegetables, she used to stop at this boarding cook where they serve all these bachelors, you know, they serve the meal morning, and they make their lunch, and then dinner. So they have this big cast-iron thing where they cook rice, and they had this, they call it *koge*?

WN: The burnt rice?

SJ: Yeah. It's not really burnt, but it's crispy.

WN: Brownish.

SJ: Yeah. So my mother used to buy at twenty-five cents a bag, that. And she used to bring it home and she used to mix it with this pig slop, you know, with some kind of grass. And then she used to boil it and then feed it to the pigs with the rice.

WN: Middling, too? Did she get middling?

SJ: Yeah, middling, too. All that mixed together, and she used to feed it to the pigs.

WN: How many pigs did you have?

- SJ: All depends. If we had sucklings, then we had more, but usually, it was one or two mother pigs. Then when you have suckling pigs, then you get more, but usually they sell it off.
- WN: Mm hmm. Did you folks slaughter pigs at all?
- SJ: Yes. We slaughtered. My mother didn't kill. My father didn't know how. So we had this man, neighbor man come—Nishihara, he used to live down the street. And he used to come and kill the pig. And then they take orders. Whoever wants will come and buy. They deliver the pig and stuff like that. And then the next time, somebody else kill, and they take orders and then they buy. Because they didn't have refrigerator. So that's when you have pork. Otherwise, you don't have pork.
- WN: Right. Were there Okinawan families living on Moloka'i?
- SJ: Yes.
- WN: I know Uyehara.
- SJ: Yeah, but he was married to Hawaiian woman.
- WN: I see.
- SJ: But we had one living right next to us in Mapulehu, I forgot to mention his name, Nishihara. He was a bachelor, and he had pigs. He didn't do too much farming, but he had pigs.
- WN: He was Okinawan?
- SJ: Yeah, Nishihara. He died, too. And he used to make the most delicious pancake in the pan, you know. Thick and fat. It looks like a cake. (WN laughs.) We used to watch him. He used to make and he used to just flip it and it just used to be this thick. And he used to cut it up like a cake. And my youngest sister used to love that, so she used to run over to him. She said, "Nishi *no san*, my father said for you to make for me pancake." So he said okay. So he used to make and she used to bring home, you know. But it was really, you know, a casual life. Everybody wasn't rich. But they were rich in health and other things.
- WN: Vegetables and other things.
- SJ: Yeah, had a happy life.
- WN: So, you being the oldest girl and your father being sick and your mother going out peddling, was there a lot of responsibility on you to keep the family together?
- SJ: No, not exactly because we all had our own chores so we all did our thing. So we didn't have any problem. Because as far as food, we had plenty to eat. You know, sometime you not that hungry because you eat all kind of junks.
- WN: So what time would your mother leave in the morning to go peddling?

SJ: She left about four o'clock in the morning.

WN: And what time would she come back?

SJ: Depends. Sometimes she came home late.

WN: Like in the afternoon, you mean, or . . .

SJ: No, she came home about six o'clock, I think.

WN: Oh, yeah? Six o'clock A.M.?

SJ: In the evening.

WN: Evening? Wow. So who's responsibility was it to get all the kids dressed?

SJ: Oh, they did it themselves, you know. My sister used to . . .

WN: Oh, you didn't have to . . .

SJ: No. And then we washed, but in those days, when we washed, we had to cook our clothes, you know, boil the clothes.

WN: Oh, yeah. Tell me about that.

SJ: We used to boil our clothes and we used to hit it with the stick, you know, brush. And we had this old bar soaps. We didn't have powdered soap. We had bar soap.

WN: Where did you get the bar soap from?

SJ: Stores. You buy it. They have the Crystal White and then they have this thick, big fat brown soap. And we scrubbed that and boiled it.

And then those days, they have rice bags. Thick rice bag. Now they don't have it, I don't see it anymore. But they had two kinds. My mother used to make things for us, you know, our slips and stuff like that. And then the outside part, they used to bleach it because it has those words on it. You put soap on it and dry it in the sun to bleach it because they didn't have Clorox. Maybe they did have, but they didn't know about it. But they used to put soap on it, and they bleach it in the sun, and it used to come white.

WN: And that was your underwear?

SJ: No, that was our sheet, the thick ones.

WN: Oh, I see.

SJ: The thin one was ours. My mother used to make. You know, all the mothers there used to make. Underwear, slips and stuff like that. But the thick one was like sheet. They used to sew

it together and . . .

WN: And did you wash clothes near your house?

SJ: Oh, yeah, because we had plenty water, we didn't have to pay. Because we had a spring up in the valley, Mapulehu Valley, and the people up there used to go up there and clean it out if the water was kind of slow in coming down. Sometimes they have this roots from the trees go into the pipes. So they used to go up there and clean it up. And everybody had water.

WN: Oh, so there were pipes?

SJ: Yeah. We had pipe. So we didn't have to pay for water.

WN: So the water went from the stream to the pipe?

SJ: Yeah, it was a spring way up in Mapulehu Valley.

WN: And to water the vegetables and everything, same thing?

SJ: Yeah, we used that. We had to use the big kerosene can, the five-gallon can. Put it in there, fill it up, and then we had to water.

WN: Oh, every day?

SJ: Depends. Sometimes if you have rain, you don't have to. But then, if you lucky enough, then you can have the water running, you know, make trough, and running because it was all hilly in those places. A lot of rocks, so you can't have ditches and stuff like that. Because I think at one time, some of those places were taro patches because they have those square stone-wall-like thing [i.e., *lo'i*].

WN: Do you remember taro being grown?

SJ: Not in our area. But on the east side, they had taro patches.

WN: You mean, like Hālawa side?

SJ: Hālawa and Honouli Wai and those place, they had taro. But in our area, we didn't have any taro because it's too dry. But we did have a *heiau* right below which we used to play on.

WN: Nobody scolded you for doing that?

SJ: No, nobody scold us. We just went on there and played there and didn't think nothing of it.

WN: Is the *heiau* still there?

SJ: It's still there. It's called 'Ili'ili'ōpae.

WN: Oh, 'Ili'ili'ōpae, yeah, yeah.

SJ: Yeah, it's still there. I don't know what condition it is now, but.

WN: What kind of games did you folks play as a child?

SJ: Well, we played marbles, played tops, played *olivia* [*alubia*] ball which was a Durham bag stuffed with cotton, because we had cotton growing. And we played beanbag. We put *koa* [*koa haole*] seeds in it. And we played *olaria* ball they call it, and we had a tennis ball.

WN: *Olaria* ball?

SJ: Yeah.

WN: Yeah? I never heard that before.

SJ: And we used to play *olivia* ball and that. Beanbag, marbles, tops.

WN: I assume you folks made all that?

SJ: Yeah, and then we played baseball.

WN: Was there a park around there?

SJ: No, Japanese school, we made our own baseball. (Chuckles) We played. So otherwise, it wasn't anything much, you know, but still, we had our own fun.

WN: Were there a lot of fruit trees around in that valley?

SJ: Yeah, we had mountain apple, we had rose apple, we had oranges. And then, well, you had our own bananas and papayas, which we didn't have to buy. There were some mangoes. And later on, HSPA planted some grapes and passion fruits, stuff like that.

WN: Were there any White families living up there, *Haole*?

SJ: No. But when we first moved, there was a Fernandez family used to live there. He used to take care the dairy, but then the dairy closed down. I don't know where they went.

WN: And did you folks go fishing at all?

SJ: No, we didn't go fishing. We used to dig clams and we used to go crabbing.

WN: At where?

SJ: Down the beach. There used to be a fish pond there. I don't know whose fish pond it is, but that was the HSPA fish pond, that's what we used to call it, but we don't know. You know, there was one, right after you pass Otsuka's place, it was on this side, going toward Kamalō. I don't know whose fish pond it is. But we used to go in there and dig clams and stuff like that.

WN: Did they have a lot of clams?

SJ: They did have, but now, I don't think they have anymore. Everything is . . .

WN: Before you could go into the fish pond, did you have to ask permission at all?

SJ: No, we never did.

(Laughter)

SJ: We never did [ask permission] because people just took enough. They didn't over take or anything. Everybody just took enough to eat, so. Because you didn't have refrigerator or anything, so how much can you eat? It's not like now. Now, everything is, you take everything what you can. But those days, they didn't have such things. So we just went and helped ourselves.

WN: What about fishing, did you do any fishing then?

SJ: No, we didn't do any fishing because people brought fish to us. So if they brought fish, we'd exchange. We'd give them vegetables or whatever we had, you know.

WN: Yeah, I see.

SJ: And once in a while, the Otsuka family used to go hunting, so they used to bring deer meat.

WN: That must have been a treat, yeah?

SJ: Yeah. But we didn't have refrigerator, so my mother used to dry it, you know, make a jerky out of it. And we used to put it on the *furo*, [fire] you know, after you let the hot water boil for little bit, have this *kiawe* charcoal, put it on there and we used to broil it and put corn in there. We used to put sweet potato in there. Was all black, but we still . . .

(Laughter)

SJ: Because we don't know what it is, you know, for the time or anything. No way of gauging it, so you think it is ready, but it's all black by the time you get it, so you just ate whatever.

WN: As long as it's cooked, yeah?

SJ: Yeah.

WN: (Laughs) So you folks had corn, too?

SJ: Yeah, we had corn, too, but it was for family use. It wasn't to sell or anything. Just had it for family use. Eggplant.

WN: I see. So mainly, what were the things that your mom sold or shipped out?

- SJ: My mother—was tomatoes and sometimes watermelon. Was mostly tomatoes.
- WN: Mostly tomato?
- SJ: Sometimes watermelon.
- WN: So your mother would drive the car all the way down to . . .
- SJ: Kualapu'u.
- WN: Kama . . .
- SJ: Oh, you mean to deliver?
- WN: Yeah.
- SJ: To deliver, yeah, Kamalō Wharf. And then the *Moi* used to take it.
- WN: She'd put it in crates?
- SJ: Yeah, you have to put it in the crate to pack it, and then they ship it.
- WN: And then where would the tomatoes go?
- SJ: Go to those produce stores.
- WN: In Honolulu?
- SJ: Yeah, Fukunaga [i.e., Eagle Produce] and I think was Pacific—they used to call it Taihei-yō Bussan, so must be Pacific-something.
- WN: Yeah.
- SJ: I don't know too much. But they used to have all that. Chun Hoon, they have all those.
- WN: Yeah, so your mom was a real entrepreneur, yeah?
- SJ: Yeah (chuckles).
- WN: She must have worked hard.
- SJ: She had to.
- WN: Did you ever go with her?
- SJ: No.
- WN: She never asked you or wanted you folks to go with her?

SJ: No, she didn't, so.

WN: So she collected the money and everything, too, then?

SJ: Yeah. The only time that we went with her was if we have to go to the dentist or something. And she took us down to Kaunakakai to Dr. [Arthur] Chu's.

WN: Oh, all the way to Kaunakakai?

SJ: Yeah, because he was the only dentist that we knew of.

WN: So what was Ah Ping Store like?

SJ: Ah Ping Store was like a family store. You know, people who didn't have money, they charge it until payday. Then they have a book that they write it down, you know, how much you charge on what day. And then when you get paid, they go down there and pay. Especially people who work for the county or something like that, they get paid certain times. So they go down there and they charge. Although we didn't charge anything there because my mother went to Kaunakakai so she could get her stuff there on her way back from peddling.

WN: What kind of things were sold in there?

SJ: Ah Ping Store?

WN: Yeah.

SJ: Oh, they had rice and whatever people want. They used to have bread come in from Honolulu. Love's used to send bread down.

WN: Oh, yeah. Oh, you didn't get all Kanemitsu bread?

SJ: No, not all Kanemitsu bread. But Kanemitsu boy, one of the oldest boys used to come and peddle those groceries our way, up Pūko'o way. He used to bring Japanese goods. And he used to peddle. He had a truck that he used to bring over and peddle whatever Japanese goods you wanted, he had it. His name was Takeo, I think.

WN: So he [Ah Ping] had rice, bread, feed, I guess, huh?

SJ: Yeah. Feed.

WN: And canned goods?

SJ: Canned goods and those Chinese cookies and stuff like that. Because I remember some of them used to buy that sugar cookies. They used to buy that, and that was their lunch. Some of them used to bring that as lunch. But for us, we used to bring *musubi*. Japanese brought *musubi*.

WN: Every day?

SJ: Every day, *musubi* because we didn't have sandwiches, or else, you bought lunch at school. But nickel, those days, was kind of big money. So people, Japanese usually bring lunch. They hardly bought.

WN: And I know Ah Ping had a gasoline pump, too, yeah?

SJ: Yeah, they had a gas station.

WN: Was that the only gas station on the East End?

SJ: Yeah. They had one at Chow Kwan Store. That one closed down, but anyway, they had one gasoline pump there, too. That was between—before you get to Buchanan's place. They had . . .

WN: What was the name of that store?

SJ: Chow Kwan.

WN: Chow . . .

SJ: Kwan. I don't know how he spell it, but anyway, he had a gasoline pump there.

WN: Oh, okay. What about like Lin Kee? Did they have pump?

SJ: No, they didn't have. They didn't have at the store. And then right across from Chow Kwan, there was an Ah Pun Store. I think that was part of Ah Ping, I think, because Ah Ping used to—he was a bachelor man, and Ah Ping used to go there.

WN: Any other stores? You said Ah Tim had a store?

SJ: That's the one with Ah Pun, you know, Ah Pun was across from Chow Kwan Store. And must have been a part Ah Ping's because I used to see the Ah Ping boy go there, you know, sort of.

WN: I see. What store did you go to the most?

SJ: We didn't go very much to the stores, you know.

WN: Did they deliver at all?

SJ: No. If you have the Kanemitsu boy come, maybe he delivered whatever you ordered, but aside of that, they didn't deliver anything.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: Okay. Now, your father passed away in 1937.

SJ: Mm hmm.

- WN: How did that affect your mother in terms of the workload or anything . . .
- SJ: No, it didn't affect anything because we kids helped. It didn't affect. Because he didn't do much anyway because he was sickly. So we managed.
- WN: Oh, by the way, how good was your mother's English?
- SJ: Wasn't that bad. At least she could converse with people. But in Moloka'i, those days, they used Hawaiian language and everything all mixed up, you know.
- WN: Yeah. (Chuckles)
- SJ: So it wasn't that bad. At least they could converse. I think her English was better than some of the ladies'.
- WN: What is her background in Japan?
- SJ: She was a farmer. She came from a farm.
- WN: Kumamoto?
- SJ: Kumamoto. They had farm. They had rice fields. But now, they don't have rice. They don't have too much rice field. They have tobacco, where she was born.
- WN: Was she a picture bride?
- SJ: Yes, she was a picture bride. Came in 1920 and landed on Maui. So that's where I was born.
- WN: Lahaina?
- SJ: Mm hmm.
- WN: Was your father a plantation worker then?
- SJ: At that time, yes.
- WN: Pioneer [Mill]?
- SJ: At that time, yeah, he was working for a while. And then, they moved to Moloka'i.
- WN: Okay. So your mother continued the vegetable farming after your father died, yeah?
- SJ: Mm hmm, until the war, you know, after the war, they . . .
- WN: Okay, so what happened during the war?
- SJ: Then she worked for the CPC [California Packing Corporation] plantation, in the pineapple field.

WN: You mean after she lost the [land in] in Mapulehu?

SJ: She had to.

WN: Do you remember anything about that?

SJ: No, I don't, because I was already here [Honolulu].

WN: I see, I see. When did you come to Honolulu?

SJ: In 1938.

WN: So what made you come here?

SJ: Well, I came here to learn sewing (chuckles).

WN: Oh, that's right.

SJ: Yeah, I came to learn sewing. I stayed with my uncle in Waipahu.

WN: So you were about seventeen years old, yeah?

SJ: Yeah.

WN: So when you came here, your mother was still in Mapulehu?

SJ: Yes.

WN: And so during the war, she . . .

SJ: She had to get out from there.

WN: She had to get out, and then where did she go?

SJ: Then she went to 'Ualapu'e, that Hitchcock's place, you know, across the Hustace place. She stayed there.

WN: And what did she do there?

SJ: She went to work in the pineapple fields.

WN: Oh, I see. So she didn't farm at all?

SJ: No, there was no farm anyway, there was no farmland. Then she sold her truck and everything, you know. But before that, she went to Japan to see her mother because her mother was still living. And she came back on the last boat from Japan.

WN: Just before the war [started]?

SJ: Yeah.

WN: I see.

SJ: And then the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] came and checked up on her seven times, said she was a spy. And she said, "I'm not a spy, I got four kids, I can't be a spy." But she said, "If you want to take me, I'm willing to go providing you take care the kids." So then they never bothered her after that.

WN: Your mother sounds like a very tough person.

SJ: She was a fighter. That's why in Japan, they used to call her *otoko-masaru*. That's the tomboy. She was a tomboy. Because she said her oldest brother came here. My mother stayed, and her second brother above her was sickly. She was the oldest girl, so she had to do all the dirty work. That's why she was just like a tomboy.

WN: So when you left [Moloka'i for Honolulu] in '38, did she encourage you to go?

SJ: Yeah, she sent . . .

END OF SIDE ONE.

SIDE TWO

WN: Okay.

SJ: Most of the parents expected you to send money home, right? You worked and send money home, but my mother never did ask. She said, "What you earn is yours." Because my father always said that we didn't raise kids to make them work to support them. He said after all, they didn't come in this world because they wanted to. My father said, "After they grow up, that's their life." He said, "You don't take money from them." That was my father's philosophy.

WN: So when you left in '38, your three sisters were still at home?

SJ: Yeah, they were still at home. And then my sister came to school, and she worked as a maid, and then went McKinley [High School]. She graduated from McKinley. And then she went to Cannon's [Business College]. She graduated from there, and then she went to work for IRS [Internal Revenue Service] until she retired. And then after that, the other sister came out, she went to McKinley, too. And then she went to nursing school. At that time, Kuakini had a nursing school. And I think she was the second to the last group that graduated from Kuakini. Then she went to Maui to work for a little while. She got her RN [registered nurse] degree, passed her bar, then she went to Maui. Then she went to the Mainland to the school of anesthesia in St. Louis. Then she graduated from there, and then she came back and she worked for St. Francis [Hospital] for a while, then she went to Kuakini and she retired from there. And then my youngest sister, with my mother, came out.

WN: When did they come out?

SJ: I'm not sure what year. They came out 1952, I think.

WN: She was working in the pineapple fields up until then?

SJ: Yeah. And then she came out. Then my mother stayed with me, and my sister went to stay with my other sister. And she went to Kaimukī High for a while, and then she went to Schofield High. She graduated from there. Then, she went to University [of Hawai'i] for a year.

WN: Wait, Schofield High?

SJ: Yeah, they used to have a Schofield High.

WN: Really? Not Leilehua?

SJ: No, was Schofield High.

WN: In Wahiawā?

SJ: [Yes.] Because my brother-in-law was in the service. So she went to Schofield High. She graduated from there. And then she went to university, but she was working for this Black family that was—the brother married Shirley Temple. James Black's family.

WN: Oh, Black, yeah, okay.

SJ: Charles married Shirley Temple. But my sister worked for James Black, and they took her on the *Lurline* to the Mainland. And then she went to business school up there. Then she went to work for Kaiser up there. Then she moved, then she went to work at Fresno Community Hospital. Then, she passed away.

WN: And how about you?

SJ: Me?

WN: You came in 1938?

SJ: Yeah, but I didn't finish high school. I didn't finish high school. Then I went to work as maid. Then later on, I got married.

WN: When did you get married?

SJ: In 1942. Then I had two children, then I went to work as waitress.

WN: When did you start that?

SJ: Well, after my mother came, I started to work.

WN: Fifties, yeah?

SJ: Then I went to work here and there, and then finally I landed up in Sheraton [Hotels] and I retired from there.

WN: I see.

SJ: But I worked for this Chinese restaurant for seventeen years, you know . . .

WN: Yeah? Where?

SJ: . . . was a small family [restaurant], waterfront, you know, where the Prince Kūhiō Building is now. They used to have the restaurant there, and then next door, used to be the HASP, Hawaiian Armed Services Police. And the Coast Guard station was right across. I worked there until they tore down the place because that Kūhiō building was coming up.

WN: Oh, so near that Flamingo, the old Flamingo Restaurant?

SJ: Well, it was close by, but it wasn't there, first one. And then there was Maggie's Inn, huh, and then the Flamingo. And they had Leroy's on the other side, too.

WN: Yeah, I remember Leroy's. That was the ocean side?

SJ: Yeah.

WN: Yeah. So what grade did you finish in school?

SJ: The tenth.

WN: Tenth grade at Kilohana?

SJ: Yeah.

WN: So that was before Moloka'i High came up?

SJ: Moloka'i High, just about that time.

WN: So when you left school to come to Honolulu, did you have any kind of goals in mind of what you wanted to be?

SJ: No, I didn't have anything, you know, just . . .

WN: Were you able to use your sewing training?

SJ: Well, I just did for home. I didn't think about sewing for anybody or anything like that. Just the home.

WN: Did you miss Moloka'i at all?

SJ: No, I didn't miss it. Because when you go there, your friends are all gone, you know, there's nobody there. They're all out here or they're married or. . . . So we didn't miss it because everybody's gone. So even when we went back for the reunion, you didn't recognize half of the people because, you know, they've changed.

WN: I see. Did you go back at all to visit your mother?

SJ: No, my mother came to stay with me.

WN: That's right. I see. Did she ever tell you that she was sad that she lost the Mapulehu lands?

SJ: No, she didn't say anything. She was happy wherever she was, I guess (chuckles).

WN: Yeah, I see. What are your thoughts of Moloka'i, now?

SJ: Well, it's not the same, it's changed.

WN: How has it changed?

SJ: I think it's sort of like getting to be more commercial, you know. It's still a dead place, but it's getting to be more commercial, now. And all your friends are gone so no sense going back there. And you have nothing in common there anymore because the people are all gone.

WN: So you know, today, here we are sitting in Windward Mall, big shopping center, in a nice restaurant, and when you think back on your life, you know, what do you see . . .

SJ: But I still think back, you know, you still have that old feeling that it was a really no hassle, you know, it was just a casual life. I think it was a good life. Even the food used to taste good. Now, no matter what you eat, it doesn't taste that good.

(Laughter)

SJ: You know, we didn't have steak or anything every night, but still then, the food tasted better than what you eat now. I guess we're spoiled. Even if you had chicken, you didn't kill chicken until somebody came to visit you or had you over for dinner and stuff like that. But it was still cooked with vegetables. It was not fried chicken or anything like that, like now.

WN: Yeah. Have your [children] ever asked you about what life was like, your early life?

SJ: No, she never did ask.

WN: Well, now, she can read your story, now, and learn more.

SJ: I guess so (chuckles). She went to university here.

WN: Okay, well, that's all, thank you very much.

SJ: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW

‘UALAPU‘E, MOLOKA‘I

*Oral Histories
from the East End*

Volume I

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